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SHAFTESBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR

1956

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Medical Officer of Health -
NOEL F. PEARSON, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector -
W. E. BREEDS, M.A.P.H.I., C.S.I.B.

Council Offices,
STURMINSTER NEWTON,
Dorset.

1st June, 1957.

To the Chairman and Members,
Shaftesbury Rural District Council.

Madam & Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1956.

The report is prepared and will be circulated in accordance with the requirements of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations 1935 and 1951.

The information with regard to climatic conditions on Page 2 was kindly provided by Lord Basing.

The report shows that the health of the District has remained satisfactory during the year and that there has been no undue incidence of serious infectious disease. The vital statistics compare favourably with those of the Country as a whole, indeed the death rate very favourably. It is satisfactory to note that the number of illegitimate births were only two compared to six in 1955 and that there were only two infantile deaths (both in illegitimate children) compared with seven in 1955. Stillbirths, however, were seven as compared with two in the previous year.

I am indebted to your Public Health Inspector, Mr. Breeds, for his co-operation and help during the year and for his assistance in preparing this report, particularly in respect of the sanitary statistics for which he is responsible. I am also indebted to your Waterworks Manager, Mr. Burtt, for his co-operation and assistance in compiling the sections of this report dealing with the water supplies of the district, and to my clerk, Mrs.P.Dyas, for her efficient services.

I would also like to acknowledge the happy co-operation and assistance I always obtain from your Clerk and the other members of your staff.

Finally, may I thank you, Madam and Gentlemen, for your courtesy and consideration throughout the year.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

Medical Officer of Health.

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SHAFTESBURY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR

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A. Area - 42,000 acres.
Rateable value: 1st April 1956 - £76,143; 1st April 1957 - £77,013.
Production of a penny rate: 1956/57 - £310; 1957/58 - £287.

Vital Statistics.

Population (Registrar General's Estimate) - 9,820.

LIVE BIRTHS.

	Male.	Female.		Comparative Rates (a) Shaftesbury R.D.C.	(b) England & Wales.
Total	94	61	) Rate per 1,000		
Legitimate	93	60	) resident pop:		
Illegitimate	1	1	) = 15.6	18.1	15.7

STILLBIRTHS.

Total	7	Nil	Rate per 1,000 live & stillbirths = 43.2	43.2	23.0

DEATHS.

Total	54	38	Rate per 1,000 resident pop: = 9.4	8.1	11.7
Deaths in infants under one year (Both illegitimate)	1	1	Infantile death rate per 1,000 live births = 12.9	12.9	23.8

	1956.	1955.	1954.	1953.
Deaths from Maternal Causes	- Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
" " Tuberculosis	- 1	Nil	Nil	Nil
" " Cancer of the Lungs	- 1	2	3	6
" " Coronary Disease (Angina)	- 15	16	18	19
" " Influenza	- 3	2	Nil	4
" " Pneumonia	- 3	5	3	7
" " Motor vehicle accidents	- Nil	Nil	2	1
" " All other accidents	- 1	1	Nil	2
" " Suicide	- 2	2	Nil	2

B. Nature of the District.

The District is mainly rural in character with an urbanised area in Gillingham. The principal industries and trades of the district are of a mixed nature which includes brewing, glue and fertilizer mixing, brick making, timber works, glove manufacturing and the production of dried milk products. There are two large bacon factories in the district and also The National Stud.

Climatic Conditions.

The total rainfall recorded at The Malt House, Gillingham during the year amounted to 28.98 inches. Rain or snow fell on 164 days during the year, the greatest fall in twenty-four hours being on January 30th when the amount recorded was 0.93 inches. On no occasion during the year was one inch of rain recorded in twenty-four hours.

The wettest month of the year was August with 5.14 inches recorded and the driest was February when rain fell on only three days and the total amount for the month was 0.10 inches. For the second year running rainfall was below the average.

The monthly totals were as follows -

January	4.09 inches.	July	2.26 inches.
February	0.10 "	August	5.14 "
March	1.10 "	September	4.34 "
April	1.39 "	October	2.32 "
May	0.52 "	November	0.80 "
June	2.12 "	December	4.80 "

Total for the year = 28.98 inches (1955 = 28.11 inches).

The chief weather events of the year were the abnormally dry Spring and the exceptionally wet August and September. In fact the whole Summer was inclined to be cold and damp and the thermometer hardly went up to 80 degrees at all, in fact there were only two days when it did.

C. Personal Health Services in the District.

The person health services, including the ambulance service, continued to be provided by the County Council and I do not consider any comments are called for in respect of these services.

Hospital and Laboratory facilities are provided by the Salisbury and The Bournemouth and West Hants Hospital Management Committee.

D. Environmental Health Services.

SANITARY STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health (Part time) - Noel F. Pearson, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

He also acts as Medical Officer of Health to four other District Councils in the North Dorset Area and as Assistant County Medical Officer to the Dorset County Council.

The time available which he has to devote to his duties with your Council is one half day per week.

Chief Public Health Inspector and Inspector of Meat and Other Foods (Full time) - W.E.Breeds, M.A.P.H.I., C.S.I.B.

SANITARY STAFF (Continued)

Additional Public Health Inspector to 1.3.56 (resigned)	-	D.J.Anthony, M.A.P.H.I.
Additional Public Health Inspector and Inspector of Meat and Other Foods (appointed 1.3.56)	-	L.F.Warren, M.A.P.H.I.
Meat Inspector (Part time)	-	Lt.Col.T.Sealy Green, M.R.C.V.S.

Clerical Staff - one clerk (full time)

WATER SUPPLY.

Quantity. Supplies throughout the year were adequate to meet the demand and, in addition, 880,000 gallons were supplied in bulk to Shaftesbury Borough.

Quality. The bacteriological and chemical quality of the principal supplies remained satisfactory during the year.

All public supplies are chlorinated.

Bacteriological Examination of Water Supplies. The following table gives particulars of the number of samples of water taken (before chlorination) for bacteriological examination, and the results obtained shown in accordance with Ministry of Health classification:-

Source of Sample.	No. taken.	Results.
Reservoir for Gillingham at Mere	2	Both satisfactory.
Boyne Hollow	13	All satisfactory.
Motcombe	15	11 satisfactory. 3 unsatisfactory. 1 suspect.
Fontmell Magna Private Supply	4	3 satisfactory. 1 unsatisfactory.
Other Supplies	6	5 satisfactory. 1 suspect.

New Works carried out during the year. At the end of the year the installation of the pumping plant at the new Stubhampton Source was almost completed and domestic drainage of the houses around the borehole were being made satisfactory in anticipation of taking water from that supply.

New Connections made during the year:-

Domestic Supplies	31
Agricultural Supplies	30
Other Supplies	4

Distribution. Apart from Bourton, where a considerable amount of properties have private supplies, and Fontmell Magna, where a number of houses are still supplied from the Fontmell Magna private supply, practically all other houses and farms in the district take their supplies from the Council's mains.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The extension and improvement of the existing Iwerne Minster Sewage Works were completed during the year at a cost of £4,271.

No work was commenced during the year in connection with the Gillingham or other post-war parish Sewerage Schemes.

It is regrettable that national and local financial resources necessitate the postponement of many very necessary parish Sewerage Schemes year after year. Inevitable public health nuisances continue to occur as a result of their absence and expenditure has to be wastefully incurred from time to time in temporarily abating these nuisances.

It is confidently anticipated that the Gillingham Sewerage Scheme will be commenced during 1957.

Continued supervision of the council house septic tanks was maintained and a number of improvements effected to some of the tanks during the year.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

House Refuse and Salvage. The service for the collection of house refuse and salvage has remained the same as in preceding years. A weekly collection is made in Gillingham and a monthly collection throughout the remainder of the district.

The existing refuse tipping area at Bleet will soon be exhausted and, to date, no alternative suitable site has been found and acquired. Wherever a site is found, it is most unlikely that the present insufficient method of only partly controlled tipping practiced at Bleet will be able to continue.

The increased labour and equipment required to obtain properly controlled tipping will be an additional inevitable charge on the Council's financial resources.

The quantity of salvage collected during the year amounted to 96 tons compared with 99 tons in the preceding year. The income received from the sale of the salvage amounted to £671.13s.0d compared with £818.4s.0d in the preceding year.

Cesspool Emptying. No cesspool emptying is undertaken by the Council.

RIVERS AND STREAMS POLLUTION.

Until adequate parish sewerage schemes can be provided, a gross amount of pollution of streams and ditches in the district cannot be avoided. This type of pollution is present in many parishes in the district.

SHOPS ACTS.

No. of inspections carried out	25
No. of defects found	4
No. of notices served	Nil
No. of notices complied with	Nil

FACTORIES ACT 1937.

	No. of premises on register.	Inspections.	Written Notices.
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by the Local Authority	7	5	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	33	33	2
Total -	40	38	2

	No. of cases in which defects were:- Found.	Remedied.
Sanitary Conveniences - Unsuitable or defective	1	1
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	1	1
Total -	2	2

No. of outworkers = 104.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

Complaints were received with regard to smoke nuisance at Gillingham. Some alteration and improvement at the Factory concerned which was carried out led to some improvement of the conditions, but the conditions there cannot yet be considered to be totally satisfactory.

SWIMMING BATHS.

There is no swimming bath in the district to which the public have access.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS AND CAMPING SITES.

There are no camping sites in the district. Licenses in connection with the occupation of six moveable dwellings were granted during the year.

VERMINOUS PREMISES.

No reports of verminous premises were received during the year. Six cases of fly infestation were dealt with, D.D.T. spray being the method of choice.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949.

The duties of the Council under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 are carried out in the district by the North Dorset Joint Rodent Committee, whose activities cover the five districts in the North Dorset Area and the Beaminster Rural District. Thirty cases of infestation were referred to the Joint Committee by the Public Health Inspector.

RAG FLOCK AND OTHER FILLING MATERIALS ACT 1951.

No premises in the district are registered or licensed under this Act.

PET ANIMALS ACT 1951.

There was only one shop in the district licensed for the keeping and sale of pet animals under the above-mentioned Act, in respect of which twelve visits of inspection were made.

SCHOOLS (INCLUDING SCHOOL CANTEENS).

Inspection of the school canteens in the district were carried out during the year and were found to be satisfactory.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACTS 1948 & 1951 - Section 47.

No action was required to be taken during the year under these Acts with regard to the removal of persons in need of care and attention and living under insanitary conditions.

HOUSING.

Total number of houses in the district	3,288
Inspection of dwelling houses during the year -	
Total No. of dwelling houses inspected during the year	457
No. of inspections made	678
No. of informal notices served	108
No. of informal notices complied with	97
No. of statutory notices served	9
No. of statutory notices complied with	13
No. of houses reported under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936	18
Action taken by the local authority in respect of such houses -	
Demolition Orders made	8
Undertakings accepted for -	
Closure	4
Reconditioning	4
Other action	2
No. of houses included in Clearance Areas during the year	Nil

Slum Clearance.

Steady, if rather slow, progress has been maintained throughout the year in respect of slum clearance. 18 houses (compared with 17 during the preceding year) have been represented and dealt with as individually unfit houses. It is anticipated that the several small proposed Clearance Areas in the District will be represented for action early in 1957.

A considerable number (108) of notices have been served in respect of items of 'unfitness' resulting in the remedying of the defects in a large proportion of cases.

Overcrowding.

No cases of statutory overcrowding were found or abated during the year.

Houses Let in Lodgings.

No houses are known to be let in lodgings.

Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954.

No application was received during the year under the above-mentioned Act. It is apparent, therefore, that property owners are not taking advantage of the provisions of the Act to enable them to increase the rents of their property.

Improvement Grants (Housing Act 1949 and Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954).

Forty-nine owners (compared with 43 in the preceding year) have taken advantage of the provision of grants under the Housing Act 1949 for the improvement of property.

New Houses.

No new dwellings were provided by the Council during the year. Eight houses were built in the district by private enterprise.

Forty-seven families were rehoused by the Council during the year.

After initial difficulties, and some reluctance on the part of some tenants to disclose their financial means on application for a rent rebate, the rent rebate scheme adopted by the Council is working well and equitably.

At the end of the year there were 189 applicants on the Council's waiting list compared with 229 at the beginning of the year. There appeared to be a lessening in the demand for Council houses for farm workers. This, if a fact, may be due to an increasing number of farm cottages being made acceptable to farm workers as a result of an increasing use of improvement grants and the building of new farm cottages.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES.

Milk.

Food & Drugs (Milk & Dairies) Act 1944.

No. of 'dealers' subject to registration by the District Council under regulation 14 of the Milk (Special Designations)(Raw Milk) Regulations 1949	4
No. of 'dealers' subject to licensing under regulation 14 of the Milk (Special Designations)(Pasteurised and Sterilized Milk) Regulations 1949	3
No. of 'dairies' in the district subject to registration under regulation 8 of the Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949	3
No. of 'distributors' subject to registration under regulation 8 of the Milk & Dairies Regulations 1949	3

Samples.

No. of samples of milk taken and submitted for examination during the year:-

Tuberculin Tested	-	20
Pasteurised	-	138
Non-designated	-	14

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES (Continued).

Milk & Dairies Regulations 1949 - Regulation 20.

No action was called for or taken during the year.

Other Food Premises.

The number of food premises in the area, by type of business:-

Hotels, restaurants, cafes and boarding houses	33
Canteens - School and workplace	8
Confectioners	8
Meat and Fish	9
Grocers	36
Mixed Stores	-
Boarding Schools and other residential institutions	4
Food factories	3
Stalls	1
Other	9

No. of above subject to registration under Section 16 of the Food & Drugs Act 1955 in respect of -

Ice-cream	39
Sausages & prepared meats	10
Fish and chips	1

No. of samples of ice-cream submitted for Methylene Blue Test 27

No. of premises inspected during the year	96
No. of inspections carried out	102

The Food Hygiene Regulations 1955 - 1956.

A considerable amount of time of the Additional Public Health Inspector has been employed in a systematic inspection of all premises in the district subject to these regulations, which came into operation at the beginning of the year.

It is reported that as a result of these regulations and the action of the Inspector, there has been a very appreciable improvement in the hygienic conditions of premises and attitude of personnel engaged in food preparation and distribution in the District.

The Council has been advised to grant certificates of exemption in respect of certain allowed items in the regulations in seventeen instances - in the majority of these cases a wash hand basin in addition to a sink was not insisted upon by reason of the size or nature of the business carried on or premises used.

In applying the standards laid down by the Regulations, full regard has to be paid to the smallness and type of many existing food businesses in the district.

Whilst something less than all one would like to be carried out in the way of structural alteration and equipment has to be accepted in some existing food businesses, there is no reason why the highest standard should not be enforced in new businesses.

Similarly, only the highest standards of hygiene can be accepted in those food premises concerned with the preparation, handling and distribution of those types of food most usually incriminated in outbreaks of food poisoning.

Ice-Cream (Heat Treatment etc.) Regulations 1947 - 1952.

There is only one ice-cream manufacturer in the District. The above Regulations are found to work satisfactorily in respect of making ice-cream on these premises.

The majority of ice-cream sold in the district is imported pre-packed.

Byelaws in respect of Handling and Wrapping Food etc.

Such byelaws are operative within the District.

Food Inspection.

Slaughterhouses. Four licensed slaughterhouses were in operation during the year, three of which were in connection with bacon factories, the remaining one being an abattoir dealing with calves, sheep and lambs from which only a small proportion of the carcases are supplied to retail butchers for local consumption. The following table gives particulars of the total number of animals slaughtered.

Carcases and Offal Inspected and Condemned

	Cattle Excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	16	429	5,148	3,748	108,687
Number inspected	16	429	431	274	15,010
All diseases except Tuberculosis & Cysticerci: Whole carcases condemned	-	-	7	3	154
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	1,806
Percentage of the number killed affected with disease other than tuberculosis and Cysticerci	-	-	.13%	.08%	1.8%
Tuberculosis only: Whole carcases condemned	-	9	5	-	187
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	2,986
Percentage of the number killed affected with tuberculosis	-	2.1%	.1%	-	2.9%
Cysticercosis: Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	-	-	-	-	-
Generalised and totally condemned	-	3	2	1	38

I referred, at some length, to meat inspection in my Report for last year, but must do so again as another year has passed during which large numbers of carcases slaughtered in your District have passed (before or after manufacture into meat products) into other Districts without the carcases being adequately inspected for evidence of disease.

Until properly controlled meat inspection is made a statutory (rather than a permissive) duty of a local authority and until the financial arrangements are such that all local authorities can provide an adequate meat inspection service, it must be realised by all that diseased meat will be available and will be eaten by the general public. Nothing, other than an adequate inspection at the time of slaughter, will prevent this.

Legislation is urgently called for in this connection.

Butchers' Shops and Other Premises.

No. of inspections carried out during the year 56

Quantity condemned - 70 lbs Beef.

Other Foodstuffs -

Total condemned - 2cwt. 3qr. 10 lbs.

Disposal of Condemned Meat.

Most of the condemned carcases go to processing plants. Livers are disposed of to local mink farms. A proportion is disposed of by burning.

SUMMARY OF SANITARY INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT.

Total No. of inspections (under all headings)	2,234
Total No. of informal notices served	157
Total No. of informal notices complied with	149
Total No. of statutory notices served	15
Total No. of statutory notices complied with	18
No. of prosecutions	Nil

E. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.

Other than Tuberculosis -

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.
Whooping Cough	28
Pneumonia	13
Measles	6
Scarlet Fever	5
Erysipelas	1
Dysentery	1
Poliomyelitis (P)	1

Tuberculosis -

New Cases Notified.	
Respiratory.	Non.Respiratory.
4	-

Food Poisoning -

No cases of suspected food poisoning were notified during the year.

NOEL F. PEARSON.

Medical Officer of Health.